Interview with Ainslie Embree

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AINSLIE EMBREE

Interviewed by: Dorothy Robins-Mowry

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Q: This is Dorothy Robins-Mowry interviewing Dr. Ainslie Embree, Professor of History, Columbia University, on October 20, 1990.

I would like you to start out by giving me a little on your own personal, professional and life background which would establish for us how your interest in India developed and what led up to your assignment as a Counselor of Cultural Affairs at the Embassy in New Delhi.

Biographic Outline: The Acceptance Of A College Teaching Position In India And Ten Years ThereBiographic Outline: The Acceptance Of A CollegeTeaching Position In India And Ten Years There

EMBREE: Dorothy, I'll give you a quick autobiography. When a friend of mine heard that I had been appointed Cultural Counselor in Delhi, she called me and said, why is a Canadian, a specialist in Indian affairs, going out to see our culture? And in a way it was a fair question.

My interest in India began in a way in an equally peculiar fashion. After the war, that is the big war, I had come down to New York to study at Union Theological Seminary. The first

day I was there I met a missionary from India whom I had known before who asked me what I was going to do and we talked. He said there's a job in the college, the Canadian College in Indore, in India. Why don't you apply and go out to teach history? And in a sense it was as simple as that because I hadn't known for sure what I wanted to do.

And at the same time I met Sue who is now my wife who indeed had signed up to go to India with the Congregational Church to teach in Madurai in South India. It was not, as my students sometimes assume, some profound religious interest or indeed even an interest in India's history.

We went out to India and we both taught in the college, I taught history, European history needless to say, while Sue taught sociology. It was while there that I developed my interest in Indian history. We had spent a year studying language, and I read a good deal of Indian history during those years.

Q: So you really went out under missionary auspices.

EMBREE: Yes, to teach.

Q: And Sue also had this missionary education interest. Is that correct?

EMBREE: Yes.

Q: You were born in Nova Scotia?

EMBREE: Yes.

Q: But Sue was born in the United States.

EMBREE: Yes.

Q: And you just happened to come together.

EMBREE: Just happened.

Q: Very nice. And when was that, Ainslie?

EMBREE: We met in 1946—we had both served in the War. Sue was an officer in the WAVES, and I was a navigator in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Q: And how long were you at the College in Indore?

EMBREE: Ten years, 1947-58.

Q: Well, that was an interesting time right after the war.

EMBREE: Yes, it was a very interesting time. There was a great optimism in India. Nehru, of course, occupied a position in national life that's hard for anybody to occupy now. And during those years, my interests were really very much confined to Central India. I had no connection at all with the Embassy world. I think in all those years I was there, I made only one trip that had any connection with the diplomatic world and that was in 1957 to go to Delhi for a celebration at the Canadian High Commission. I forget what the occasion was. But in those ten years that was my only diplomatic adventure.

Q: Tell me just a little bit about those ten years as a basis for comparison with the years you were at the Embassy. You were teaching European history, but you were obviously also absorbing the local and Indian history and the language. What were your special interests then in India?

EMBREE: I had very general interests, as I recall, in Indian culture. Indore, where we taught, was the head of an old Princely State, the Hoekar State. And it was quite different in many ways from British India, and, of course, entirely different from India now. It was a small, very pleasant city in many ways. It had American connections because the Hoekar Maharani was an American. And there had been a previous Hoekar Maharani, a very

famous one, who was the first American, perhaps the first foreigner to marry a Maharajah. That was Nancy Miller from Seattle who married the former Maharajah in the 20's.

Indore at the time was still very much out of the main circuit of Indian life. So our lives were much more absorbed in an Indian world then would be the case now. There were some missionary ladies at the hospital and there was also a mission school, but we were among few foreigners in Indore. So that it was very unlike the kind of world one lives in in the capital city.

Q: Was your living hard or easy? To what extent were you living a western life in physical terms?

EMBREE: You raise one of the interesting questions. When we went out to India in 1948, we went out under the intention that we would live like Indians. This was very much the style at the times in missionary circles, to break away from the old patterns and live as simply as people in our own status did. In our case, this meant we would live like the other faculty at the college. Therefore, when we went out, we decided we wouldn't have any servants; we were what was known as simple livers. We eventually discovered we were impressing nobody but ourselves, that the Indians who could afford it had servants. And they assumed that if we didn't have servants, but could afford them, the explanation was because we were mean with our money. Our anxieties to be just like the other faculty in the college really never worked out, but at least we lived in the same kind of house as the Indian faculty, and we didn't have much more money than they did.

Q: They didn't want you to be Peace Corps types?

EMBREE: No, because we were not at all Peace Corps types. The Peace Corps people went out knowing they were coming back and with no thoughts of living in India. We went out with a life commitment, India was going to be our home.

Furthermore, we had none of the kinds of supports that the Peace Corps had. We were more or less on our own. And so we lived in a fashion that made us much more a part of India than what would be the case now. There was no, of course, no commissary food. As far as food was concerned, we lived exactly the same way as the Indians did.

Q: As the Indians did.

EMBREE: We got whatever was available locally, which in Central India during the rains was often very monotonous food. But it was not a hard life in any real sense. Our children were both born in India, and they were both extremely healthy. Our son was the first European child, as they say, to attend Daly College school meant for sons of Indian chiefs and princes. We didn't want to send him to the missionary school in Woodstock as other people did. It was part of our simple living pattern. It showed somewhat the contradiction of our whole aims. While we were not going to send them to the missionary school, we did send them to one of the most elegant schools.

Q: An Indian school?

EMBREE: Yes, an Indian school, a public school, in the English sense.

Q: Did you worry about his education?

EMBREE: Yes, but he had a good time at the school, even though the rest of the boys were all rich. And in that sense the contrast was very great indeed with the India we knew later with much simpler living conditions but with much deeper involvement in Indian life.

Q: Now, if you were there for ten years, what brought you home?

EMBREE: We came home after six years. We had a year's sabbatical and I came back and we both studied at Columbia for a year. Then we went back for two years. But even before I went back for two years, I was very dubious about the whole situation in which

we found ourselves. We were the last imperialists so to speak. The British had gone, but we were still running a college and hospitals and schools. They were still supported by Canadian money. And again, it was part of our own ideological feeling that there was really no place for us in the kind of setup that existed. So after two years we decided that we would come back.

Q: And you came back to where

EMBREE: We came back to New York, to Columbia.

Q: When you went back for your graduate study at Columbia, what were you studying by then?

EMBREE: I was studying history still.

Q: Asian history then?

EMBREE: In 1954, when I came back to Columbia there was only one course on Indian history taught at Columbia. It was a one semester course taught by Taraknath Das who was a famous old revolutionary. He had been one of those who during the First World War had supported the Germans against the British and had been imprisoned by the Americans as a spy. When I knew him in '55 and '56 he had become extremely conservative and a strong Republican. That was the only course in Indian history that was available at Columbia. That shows how American universities have changed.

Q: Especially how Columbia has changed.

EMBREE: How Columbia's changed. Because at the time, it mostly taught Sanskrit, but there were no courses in modern languages and modern literature.

Q: And so then you came back to Columbia and in effect you've been at Columbia ever since with your hiatus out for—

EMBREE: With exception of three years I spent at Duke, from 1969 to 1972. But otherwise, I'd been at Columbia.

The Trail Into USIA (And USIS/India)The Trail Into USIA (And USIS/India)

Q: What then was the way you were recruited to go out to New Delhi for USIA?

EMBREE: During these years at Columbia and indeed at Duke, I'd become very involved in American academic life affecting India. I was president of the American Institute of Indian Studies. I was very much involved in promoting Indian studies in American colleges, not just at Columbia but elsewhere and I'd written on India. I think my first acquaintance, real acquaintance, with the embassy in Delhi came through Margaret Clapp who was the CAO in Delhi and I got to know Margaret well, partly because I was in New Delhi at that time as the Senior Scholar with the American Institute of India Studies. So I got to know her in a professional way. But then we got to know each other very well. In fact, having a Wellesley wife—

Q: I didn't realize Sue was Wellesley.

EMBREE: —strengthened the ties. Then I knew the subsequent CAOs after that. So I got some sense of what they did, but I really didn't know very much. But what I did have involvement with in 1977-78 was the new American Ambassador to India, Robert Goheen. As you know, the Cultural Affairs Officer was regarded in some sense as the Ambassador's prerogative to have whom he wanted as a CAO. And since he knew me, he wrote and asked if I would be interested in being nominated for the job.

1977: Recruited By Newly Appointed Ambassador Robert Goheen as CAO, India1977: Recruited By Newly Appointed AmbassadorRobert Goheen as CAO, India

Q: So you were recruited by Goheen. He, of course, came out of Princeton and has his own missionary background.

EMBREE: And so we had very similar interests in many ways and he knew that I was greatly interested in India. This was a change, of course, having somebody go as CAO who was identified wholly as an Indian specialist. Margaret Clapp, for example, had been an American historian, and most CAOs I suppose, had been in American studies.

My immediate predecessor whom I knew very well, Jim Roach, had worked on India. So it was a little odd having somebody whose identification was completely with Indian studies going out as American CAO. I didn't know that at the time oddly enough. I thought it was a natural thing to get somebody who knew India.

Q: It makes sense.

EMBREE: It makes sense in some ways. I went out without any training at all in what a CAO was. I wasn't sure when I was going, but they called and said that there was an investigating team, I forget what it was called, from the State Department going out to look at what was happening in the educational cultural programs in India. And they wanted me to go out that week to be in Delhi before they arrived so that I would be able to meet them. It was somewhat of a peculiar decision. These two young men who arrived to investigate what was going on in the American Center knew nothing about its work in India and the person who was to talk to them was somebody who'd arrived exactly 24 hours before. In a way it was a good introduction to the way the State Department worked because the young men knew absolutely nothing about India.

They were traveling around in a car and they expressed strong disagreement that we were spending so much money teaching Indians to speak English. And I said, we don't spend a penny teaching Indians to speak English. And they said, how do they know English so well then if we don't teach them?

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Easy Access To Journalists, Academics, And High Ranking PoliticiansEmbree Was Sent Out To India Knowing Nothing Of Embassy/USIS Procedures Or Overall Requirements Of CAO Position, But Long Previous Experiences In India Gave Him Easy Access To Journalists, Academics, And High Ranking Politicians

But indeed trying to explain to them the cultural relations with India was an interesting introduction for me. The point I was going to make was I went out as Cultural Affairs Officer knowing almost nothing about the office and what one was to do except what I had picked up from knowing Jim Roach and Margaret Clapp. I had been out a week once before that in which I had talked to people, but that was all the introduction I had. I guess where I differed was that I knew a great many people in India. I was not an unknown.

Q: You were not a novice of the community in which you were going to work.

EMBREE: No, not at all. I knew the Indian academic world very well.

Q: Who was your Public Affairs Officer when you went out?

EMBREE: Jay Gildner.

Q: Yes.

EMBREE: And I will tell the story again whether it's on the tape or not. When I mentioned to an old retired officer that I was going out to be the cultural counselor, he asked who the public affairs officer was. When I said, Gildner, whom I hadn't met at the time, he commented that he didn't think I would get on well in India. “You get along very well at a place like Columbia,” he said, “because your superiors are even more inefficient and incompetent about business than you are, whereas Gildner has a reputation for being the most efficient Foreign Service officer in public affairs.”

Well, it turned out I got along extremely well with Jay. Indeed, he was efficient, everything that people said, but he also appreciated my knowledge of India and that I had easy

access to journalists and academics and lots of people in government and society, through purely personal contacts.

Q: This was the heritage of all your previous years.

EMBREE: It was the heritage of all my previous years that I knew all people like Mrs. Gandhi and so on. So it was a very different experience than other people have had.

Q: So you arrived really obviously not a stranger in New Delhi, but a stranger within the Embassy framework of operation.

EMBREE: A complete stranger within the framework of Embassy operations. I knew nothing at all, even what I was supposed to do. I was fortunate, of course, in having extremely good Indian assistants in the office. Shanta Chenoy was very well known and had worked there for many years. Shanta knew everybody in the Indian social and political world. Then Jay Gildner himself, of course. I realize now that he was very glad to have a Cultural Affairs officer who didn't want to manage things particularly, but who really wanted to be a—

Q: A cultural officer.

EMBREE: A cultural officer and to deal with people. So that really what I did was to meet with people, particularly academics, journalists and politicians. Those were the three groups I had most to do with, and with whom I had easy access. But I had very little involvement, oddly enough, with the management side of USIS.

Q: They didn't insist that you become involved in that.

EMBREE: No, I was involved in that sort of thing only when we had visitors or speakers and I entertained them, but I didn't have to get involved in day to day management. I'm sure other Cultural Affairs officers were much more involved.

From The Beginning Of His Tour, Embree Is Involved Extensively In USEFIFrom The Beginning Of His Tour, Embree IsInvolved Extensively In USEFI

The other thing, of course, that I was very involved in, from the very beginning, was USEFI, perhaps more than most other CAOs had been. Before I went out, there had been some very serious charges made against the director of the US Educational Foundation. As soon as I got there I was told by Jay Gildner, that the Ambassador wanted me to investigate the charges very carefully. And this again was part of the embarrassment of knowing people because, of course, I had known the Director for many years, as well as all the other people in USEFI. And this occupied a great deal of energy the first six months or so. I became deeply involved in all aspects of the USEFI program.

Q: What did they do?

EMBREE: You mean in terms of the investigation?

Q: No, no. First tell me, USEFI plays what role?

EMBREE: USEFI still plays an important role in India, but it used to be, perhaps next to Japan, the biggest US educational foundation anywhere. It used to have a large number of fellowships, both Fulbright scholars going to India, and Fulbright scholars coming here. In addition, it had many other programs funded through the Office of Education. This, of course, was all supposedly PL 480 money. There were also many summer groups of teachers in addition to the regular Fulbrights, and junior years abroad. It was an extremely active program.

I should have said I'd had one other personal involvement with USIA and USEFI before this. Back in the spring of 1977 I'd been asked to go out by CIES to visit all the Fulbright scholars in South Asia including Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. I had at that time a very interesting look at the Fulbright program. I don't think many other

persons had had a chance of visiting all of them. I'd also at that same time visited the USIS centers in all the South Asian countries.

Q: Well, you really then had your training if not in that week before you went out to India after you were recruited, you had your training in this kind of—

EMBREE: That was an extraordinarily good training because indeed I had met all the public affairs officers and all the CAOs that were there in that time.

Q: And became an independent thinker about what was happening?

EMBREE: I made a long report on my trip which I suppose is in the files somewhere.

Q: Do you have a copy of that report? They would love to have it attached to this ultimately if you could ever find it.

EMBREE: If I can find it. I'm not sure they do have a report. But it must be somewhere in the files of CIES. Yes, I did look at it very carefully and made certain recommendations, a number of which were followed. The question that had interested me most when I was there was the particular role of American Fulbrighters as teachers.

Embree Had Grave Doubts Re Utility Of American Fulbright Teachers In India, And Many Teachers Themselves Were FrustratedEmbree Had Grave Doubts Re Utility Of American Fulbright Teachers In India, And Many Teachers Themselves Were Frustrated

EMBREE: I had grave doubts about the utility of Americans being actually teachers in Indian colleges. I obviously went at this from the point of view of having been one for so many years myself.

Q: I was going to say that's a contradiction, isn't it?

EMBREE: It was a contradiction except that I was aware, having been there for so many years, what the difficulties, perhaps the impossibilities, of going into the Indian or Pakistan situation and in a year doing anything effective. The best young scholars I met in Fulbright were very frustrated realizing that they were standing up in front of a class, but the students were not going to be examined on anything they were teaching. That they were really supernumeraries and not, as they had obviously assumed they would be, actively involved in the Indian educational program.

Q: Was this because they were Americans or foreigners? Or was this by nature of the system?

EMBREE: It's all three things. It's the nature of the system that South Asian university education is very much a matter of lecturing. What the instructor does is prepare the students for examination. And it's very difficult for American teachers to think of themselves as preparing people for examinations which they don't set and they're not involved in, in any way.

Q: Is this at the secondary level as well as at the university level, or are we really talking about the universities?

EMBREE: We're talking about the universities, colleges.

Q: With my background in Japan, certainly what I know of American teachers who go out to teach at universities is that they are equally frustrated because the students really do not have to perform. And they're really advised that they can never fail a student no matter how little or how badly anyone does. This is very frustrating for American professors.

EMBREE: It was very frustrating because most Indian universities are made up of many colleges with the university setting the curriculum and exams for the colleges. So you're

teaching a curriculum that's been set by somebody else to take exams that will be set by somebody else.

Q: So that allows you no initiative and no freedom of action as an educator.

EMBREE: The other side of it is that many Indian students are very anxious in personal terms to meet the American professors and learn from them. Good students value this very highly, but it's an extra. It's not part of the system. It was that sort of thing that I was raising questions about on the Fulbright program, not the research part, but the teaching part.

Q: That's fighting the local system.

EMBREE: Yes. This was another great source of unhappiness. Many of the people, both old and young Americans, got the impression that they were going out to help change the Indian system and bring it to some new and better level.

Q: Kind of an imperialist notion.

EMBREE: It was indeed a kind of imperialist notion. I once stated in a report that the Ford Foundation and the Fulbright program became the successors of British imperialism and of missionaries. And again, since I had experience with having gone there to do good to the Indians, I understood this very well. And this was enormously frustrating when the young Americans realized that there was no conceivable opportunity of their bringing about any changes in the Indian system. It certainly needed changes but it would have to come from within. Foreigners were becoming increasingly irrelevant to the process which is of course what I had discovered in 1958, 20 years ago.

Q: And why you left?

EMBREE: Why I left. But I think most people still went out as late as '78 with this sense that they were going to bring about improvements and change.

Q: Well, this is very difficult. Americans always like to do good don't they?

Indian Academic Community And Government Exhibited Growing Resentment At The Way US Was Conducting Fulbright Teaching Assignments And At Mindset Of US TeachersIndian Academic Community And Government Exhibited Growing Resentment At The Way US Was Conducting Fulbright Teaching Assignments And At Mind Set Of US Teachers

So it really was becoming counter productive.

EMBREE: I thought the process of sending out American scholars to teach was becoming counter productive at times.

Q: But interestingly, the Indians still clamor to come to the United States to get an education.

EMBREE: That's the other side of it, of course. Obviously, I had a great deal of involvement in scholars coming and going to India. Indians, in the late "60s, had come to resent American scholars for a whole variety of reasons and didn't want them involved in research or in the whole Indian education process. I'd run into this as President of the American Institute of Indian Studies.

Q: Is this just Americans?

EMBREE: All people, but Americans were obviously more than any other. But there was a fundamental difference between, say, the Russians, the Germans, the British and the French, because they all had country-to-country arrangements, whereas we were essentially free enterprise. Our scholars went out on their own. Even the Fulbrighters

were essentially on their own. And the Indian government wanted more of an exchange controlled by the government. They especially grew disenchanted with the fact that American scholars were mostly in the social sciences. They were involved in Indian life, studying Indian life.

Establishment—And Presumed Role—Of The Indo-American SubcommissionEstablishment—And Presumed Role—Of TheIndo-American Subcommission

What the Indians wanted was reciprocity and control, and this led to the creation of the Indo-American Subcommission, of which I had been a member before I became cultural counselor. It was set up in 1976, and it was to be the great breakthrough of government to government operations on the cultural level.

Indians Had Expected A Government Controlled Commission On US Side, And Never Understood How The Commission Was StructuredIndians Had Expected A Government Controlled Commission On US Side, And Never Understood How The Commission Was Structured

Q: It's the Indo-American Subcommission on Education and Culture.

EMBREE: Yes. It didn't work out the way the Indian side hoped because while it was strictly government on their side, wholly controlled by the government, our side wasn't. Ours was a quasi-governmental institution which the Indians had difficulty understanding. The fact that the Indo-American Subcommission got its money from the American government, had very close relations with the American Centers, but that it was from our point of view a private enterprise, Indians found baffling and this always leads to suspicion that we're not what we seem. An important aspect of the Subcommission was that the Indians wanted to send scientists here and they wanted us to send scientists.

Q: Physical scientists.

EMBREE: Physical scientists, which many of us knew was not going to work. While Indian scientists want to come to the United States, not many American scientists want to go to India unless they have a special interest say in bugs or germs or some aspect of the flora and fauna.

Q: And this could be considered in some instances a negative interest, couldn't it? But you've now brought up the Indo-American Subcommission. Explain a little bit about what went on with this. I think you were involved in the development of some exhibits and some other things during that period of time.

EMBREE: The Indo-American Subcommission on Education and Culture was one of the half dozen commissions set up at the time. Technically, they were all under the Secretary of State from our side, but in fact involved various people. The Education and Cultural one, I think it's fair to say, is the one that was most active in India, and it had a number of aspects. One was sending Indians to the United States who were essentially selected by the Indian government. They emphasized training in science. Their counterparts on our side were selected not in any sense by the government, but by the CIES, the same group ultimately that ran the Fulbright. But it was strictly a private enterprise. Academics did the choosing and it was in no sense controlled by USIA, except that USIA supplied the money.

The other aspect of the cultural program that was very important was that it was to be mutual. Anything we did in India the Indians were to do with their counterparts here. And this became very much involved in museums, for example. It wasn't a matter of us sending our experts to India to do things for the Indians. It had to have reciprocity and their people coming not just to learn but to actually do something. This can be very difficult for obvious reasons. And out of this came a number of exhibits, one very interesting one on science-technology. But the big one, of course, was the festival in India / which was run by the Indo-American Subcommission but also by the cultural counselor's office. It was a very complicated operation and it worked remarkably well.

But again from the Indian side it brought up many of the difficulties inherent in our relationships that from our side it was essentially private groups, the National Gallery, the Metropolitan and so on, with the American [more or less private] side of the Subcommission doing the negotiating, but always negotiating with government institutions in India. Ted Tanen was running the Subcommission, he came essentially as a private individual, but was obviously supported by the American Center.

Q: And of course he came out of the American government.

EMBREE: He came out of the American government to add to the confusion—to the Indians he was just one more government officer. Although in his own eyes, rightfully so, he was no longer a government official.

Q: The Festival of India I think was the first of the grand festivals which have followed so that it did set a very important pattern for cultural exchanges which are still going on in the United States.

EMBREE: It was enormously successful in terms of what it brought over. However, the question the Indians still ask me was what effect did it have on Indo-American relations. This strikes me as a question we can ask of a lot of our cultural exchanges.

Q: Well, now some very spectacular things went to India under these auspices. The New York Philharmonic went, did it not?

EMBREE: The New York Philharmonic went—the biggest US program that went. There was a long and complicated story about the festival because we were supposed to have an American festival in India. We ran into great difficulties on this because the person most involved on the Indian side, who is now a curator of the National Museum in Delhi, insisted that just as our side had very largely determined what we wanted from the Indian museums, they should have equal claim from the American side which seemed all right on the surface. But of course what people like Stella Kramnisch and the others who

were arranging it, Cory Welch and the others, wanted were Indian artifacts, great Indian sculpture, paintings.

When it came to the American festival in India, what Sahare and the others demanded were impressionist paintings from the Metropolitan. And some of us had the difficult and unsuccessful task of explaining that it's perfectly true that we sent our people to ask for things from the Indian museum but they were Indian things, it was Indian culture. It was very difficult to persuade our Senators and Representatives to pay for an exhibit of French impressionist paintings in India [when our exhibit in India was supposed to be of things American]. But furthermore, that it would be very hard indeed to get the museums to lend their very valuable paintings. We could, in fact, have gotten a very splendid display of American paintings, the great 19th century painters, but the Indian side rejected this.

Q: They didn't want those?

EMBREE: They didn't want American paintings. And they said it was inferior painting and it was insulting, and so on, that we were offering them second rate American materials when they were sending us the very greatest of Indian artifacts, which was true, but it made for difficult relations.

Q: Well, it was part of the negotiations rather than part of the—

EMBREE: Another thing that happened at the same time was that a well-known American critic Katherine Kuh got involved. One of the things the Indians asked us to do was to have an exhibit of modern Indian painting and sculpture in America, which those of us involved readily agreed to. We thought it was a great idea. But it soon became apparent that we would have to have an American critic of some stature make the selection, that the American galleries would not agree to exhibiting materials that they hadn't been involved in selecting.

So Katherine Kuh came out. She was a very redoubtable woman. And she looked at all of the art that the Indians said was representative of their finest artists, all famous names, the names everyone knew. She looked at them and said they were second rate and derivative from American art. She went around the country and found what she said were wonderful stuff by unknown artists, and she refused to take any of the famous Indian artists. And of course this led to an impasse because the Indians wouldn't agree to her selection. Ms. Kuh is still annoyed with those of us who were involved and she claims that we didn't stand up for artistic principles.

Q: Well, modern art has long been a—modern American art, modern art of any kind, has long been a very controversial issue. It hinges on what people consider art and what they do not consider art.

EMBREE: Her argument was that modern art has its own validity in the country of origin, but it doesn't have validity in another country that simply copies, unless you're willing to look very closely at creativity. It was a very interesting critique. Some of the people that she said then were the best people in India are now recognized as indeed outstanding.

Q: So she's been validated.

EMBREE: She was right, and I often wondered if she knows. But it was one of those interesting problems in cultural exchange that never gets the headlines or I don't think even gets written up in our accounts.

Q: There was also a problem as I remember it about the different facilities at museums in India, Americans are fussy about humidity and temperature controls and general protection of the art which they have. The facilities in most of the, if not all, of Indian museums is at a very different level.

EMBREE: This was a very delicate matter. We had to say that even if we could have persuaded the US government to pay for an exhibit of French impressionist paintings, the

Metropolitan would never under any circumstances allow those paintings to be exhibited under Indian conditions, without humidity and temperature controls. They said, “we allow you to take our sculptures which are just as valuable as your paintings, but there's no reciprocity.”

Q: This is always one of the difficult aspects. I think one of the interesting projects which grew out of this—we're still really talking about the Indo-American Subcommission and the negotiations—was the big project of Aditi.

EMBREE: Yes, it was a very interesting project.

Q: Because that was not just an art or cultural exchange. It had other implications.

EMBREE: There are many implications. I was one of those who would not have approved of Aditi, because I knew that there were many people in India who were very strongly opposed to this.

Q: What is Aditi, Ainslie?

EMBREE: It was a show, I think is the best word, that was set up by a very enterprising young entrepreneur in Delhi called Sethi. It was made up of street musicians, street village theater people, street magicians and performers, really the poorest level of Indian society.

Q: This is side two. We're talking about Aditi.

EMBREE: It was a very interesting item in our whole cultural exchange. There are many people in India who accuse the entrepreneur who had arranged Aditi that it was exploiting the most vulnerable people in India, the children who were entertainers, beggars in effect, people who had no place in normal Indian art or culture, but who were not only village performers but were extremely poor. Sethi had been very successful in arranging shows of these people, attended at first very largely by foreigners. And then, as often happens in

India, when the upper classes realized that foreigners were interested in these things, they became interested in them, too.

And at that point he suggested that it be taken to America as part of the festival. There was very strong opposition, largely I think it's fair to say, from Marxist groups who said this was double exploitation. It was exploitation of extremely poor and vulnerable people by an Indian entrepreneur catering to the exploitive Americans. It was, however, a great success in Washington. People whom I respect said nothing had given them as much sense of India as did these performances. Sethi received a great deal of criticism when they went back because the people were literally thrown back to where they had been.

There was one pathetic story in the newspaper. One little girl was asked what she had liked about America. She said, I was able to use soap everyday. She had never used soap before in her life and she would never get it again because it was so expensive.

But it was one of those cases in which perhaps some of us were too sensitive to Indian criticisms because it did make an impression here. I think one would still have to ask the validity of using these kinds of people for this purpose, bringing them here and then just throwing them back where they were found.

Q: Well, I remember when this was going on, the arrangements in Washington were very carefully developed with home hospitality and care of these children so that there could be no question about their well-being while they were in the United States. But, of course, any kind of cultural exchange especially when it involves people from two very different kinds of cultures can create all kinds of problems. I think some years there was the same kind of problem with some of the religious dancers out of Bali who when they went home were in effect never again considered truly religious dancers. They'd been contaminated. I don't know how you get over this kind of combination of seclusion and outreach of culture which should provide better understanding of what's going on in that particular society.

EMBREE: Yes, I think that's true. The criticism made of Aditi was that it didn't give a true picture of the Indian society. It gave the impression that these children, the dancers and musicians, occupied as important a place in Indian society as they had in Washington. They were treated very well, as you say, and they all loved it. But the argument is that this gave the impression that Indians valued them the way Americans had, whereas that's not the case. They have no place in Indian culture at all. Any place they have was due to the westerners having taken them up.

Q: Of course, it's always very sad. But it's always very hard to go home again.

EMBREE: Oh, yes. Some people said of the story, that at least the little girl had soap once in her life.

Q: That's very hard. Ainslie, I know that one of the things you did incessantly was entertain almost every night. How poor Sue ever managed I don't know, but you had a house full of people. This was not only because of your generous spirit but also because of your interest in people. It was certainly one of the great ways in which you contributed to the cultural programs of all kinds at the Embassy.

EMBREE: It's just something that comes very naturally to us. We both like entertaining. One of the interesting features, we did an enormous amount of entertaining, but we never had a real cook when we were in Delhi. But Sue would be able to manage with her people by being a good boss.

Yes, I think it was very interesting the whole question of entertaining. It plays a very important role in India. I was able to entertain people because of knowing as many people as I did and able to get to know new people. I think one of the things that Americans do well, on the whole, is entertaining, and it occupies a much larger place in India than many people realize.

One of the things that many people don't know in the outside world is all the other embassies get very large entertaining allowances. Somebody used to say to me, well, it's easy for you to entertain since the government is paying for it. And I never told any of my American friends that the American government is very niggardly with everybody from the Ambassador down compared to other governments.

Q: It all comes out of your own pocket.

EMBREE: Yes, I discovered that a third secretary at the Canadian Embassy had a larger entertaining allowance than any of us did in the American Center. It's one of those things that you can't make a case for because what an outcry there would be in Washington if we suggested larger entertainment allowances.

Q: They always suspect somehow you're going to misuse it.

EMBREE: Yes, it's a very important aspect of American diplomacy that I think we do well at the personal level. And some of the young people were very good indeed. I may say in passing that I became very impressed indeed by the caliber of people in the American Embassy in Delhi when I was there, from the Ambassador down. One would expect it at the high level, but it was the younger people—the political officer, economic officers were absolutely first rate.

One of the criticisms that I've heard from people who should know better is that there were no people in the American Embassy who spoke an Indian language. This was untrue.

Q: Who spoke Hindi?

EMBREE: Ambassador Goheen. Arch Blood, the DCM, spent an hour every day studying Hindi. There were half a dozen of the younger people who had taken training in South Asian studies in this country who were fluent. We had an extraordinarily well trained staff

in the Embassy. And I think something that gets the least publicity and the least credit is how good our Embassy people are. I was interested in this being an outsider.

Assessment Of Ambassador Goheen And Other American Ambassadors Who Served In India In The Preceding Decade Or TwoAssessment Of Ambassador Goheen And Other American Ambassadors Who Served In India In The Preceding Decade Or Two

Q: Is there anything you'd like to say about Ambassador Goheen? He was after all a remarkable individual for that particular job. Did you find in observing him any particular elements which you thought either very good or maybe not so good? He is one of those political appointees who was ideally suited for the country to which he was appointed.

EMBREE: India, of course, had such an interesting series of political ambassadors, an extraordinary group going way back to people like Loy Henderson. The most famous, of course, were Chester Bowles and Pat Moynihan. I would have argued that Goheen from the Indian point of view was an excellent ambassador. But I always remember a comment made about Galbraith when he was there by the British High Commissioner. I asked him what he thought of Galbraith. He said, well, it's difficult to judge a man like Galbraith. I'm never sure—"He's the most brilliant ambassador I ever met, but I'm not sure whether he's the American ambassador to India or the Indian ambassador to America, and I'm not sure that he knows which he is." And this is an interesting sidelight on the role the American ambassadors used to play. Chester Bowles, for example, played a role that no other American ambassador has ever played. He had instant access to Nehru. He lectured the people at all levels in the Indian government, hectored them on what to do and so on. And reading his stuff, it's amazing. You can't imagine anybody now doing that.

Q: Well, of course, he was there at an unusual time.

EMBREE: Yes, he was there at an interesting time.

Q: He was the right man for that kind of time.

EMBREE: Yes, it wouldn't have worked later on. It didn't work the second time.

Q: Yes.

EMBREE: Moynihan was famous and it didn't work. Moynihan once said that he had never been asked to speak at an Indian university. But that again was part of the time. Goheen was very popular and this was partly because his parents had been missionaries there. I once mentioned to Goheen before I knew what the facts were, the only two Americans who had been knighted in India had been missionaries. He said, my grandfather was one. Who was the other one? I thought that was a great put down!

Q: That'll teach you! Ainslie, what were your working relations with the Embassy? Did you have to get involved in staff meetings or do any of those other administrative chores? Jay Gildner and the Ambassador with his confidence in you freed you from this kind of daily—

EMBREE: I suppose I did attend one or two staff meetings. I had a friendly relationship for two reasons. One was Goheen himself, of course. The other was his personal assistant, Marshall Booton, whom I had known very well.

Let me tell you a story. The day I arrived in Delhi a wire came in from the White House congratulating me which created some unhappiness. But people didn't notice the initials. It was Tom Thornton who was working in the White House and thought it would be amusing to send me a cable signed with the President's name.

Q: And Tom, of course, was a National Security staff member.

EMBREE: Yes, but people thought it was really from the President.

Q: Yes, it's like all these messages from the Secretary of State that go out on the State Department telegrams saying personal message.

EMBREE: I had very close relations, working relationships, with the Embassy people and the Voice of America people. They knew I had access to journalists and so on and I think that was useful.

Q: You were a good door opener.

EMBREE: Yes, I suppose I was a good door opener for them.

Q: Ainslie, what languages do you speak?

EMBREE: Just Hindi. But the kind of people we deal with in Delhi speak English. I think I would have said that was one argument for a Cultural Affairs Officer who's not a career person, but who has some kind of other associations and I think is recognized in this way. So I was useful to a number of people and I used to write, needless to say, things for Ambassador Goheen. I wrote him one important speech and I'd forgotten that I'd written it. And I heard him giving a speech and I went up to him and I said, Bob, that was a wonderful speech. He said, “Aren't you being a little immodest?” I'd genuinely forgotten.

Q: That raises a very important question which has got to do with a cultural officer, the top cultural officer in one of the top countries coming from outside the Foreign Service. The Foreign Service officers who aspire to promotion up the cultural line sometimes find this a very distressing situation. I don't know how you balance the two off unless what you do is really balance it off. But obviously, from everything you say you bring credentials and knowledge of people which a Foreign Service officer would rarely have in a particular country because none stay there that long.

EMBREE: There were people in India who had been around there a long time. People like Craig Baxter knew South Asia well, and there were others. But even in that case the outsider has advantages in terms of how he can meet people and the fact that he's

recognized as an outsider. Even though I had the same rank as the rest, people knew I really wasn't one of them.

Q: They still admired you because you were Ainslie Embree.

EMBREE: Well, they knew I had these other connections. I had university connections and so on. I would argue for the independent person. I'm not sure about the ambassadorial level. I would certainly always have said we were extremely lucky we had the people we had, especially Goheen who was greatly respected by Indians. They liked his style. When they wanted to say nice things about Goheen, they would say it was because he was born here, he's like us. All they meant was he was mannerly and didn't bang the table and knew how to be polite.

Q: Ainslie, during your time in India, were there any delicate diplomatic policy matters that came up that impinged upon what you were doing?

At Time Of Embree's Arrival, Communist Newspaper Falsely Accuses Him Of Close Connections With Right Wing Hindu Organization; Threatens To Run Him Out Of IndiaAt Time Of Embree's Arrival, Communist Newspaper Falsely Accuses Him Of Close Connections With Right Wing Hindu Organization; Threatens To Run Him Out Of India

EMBREE: Not really. After I had been there a week or so, the Patriot, the communist paper, published a fierce denunciation of me saying they were going to expose my connections with the RSS, the right wing Hindu organization. And if I wasn't out of India in 24 hours and so on. What had happened I discovered is that they had confused me with Walter Anderson who indeed is the best expert on right wing organizations, who is now in our Embassy in New Delhi. This raised an interesting question. I was surprised by it but some of my very close Indian friends, some in high places, called me and said if you want us to, we will write to the newspaper and say that these charges are absurd. The one man who was the vice chancellor at Delhi said, “You know our country. The best thing to do is to not say a word, for you not to reply and for none of us to reply.” He said, “I know

that many of us are going to call you personally, but we're not going to say a word to the newspapers, will you mind?" Of course he was perfectly right. Within a week it was a joke. No, I was not involved in anything delicate.

On one occasion a man came from Kabul, a reporter from an English newspaper. He said he had information he wanted to give me. It soon became apparent the information was meant for the CIA chief. And I had protested that this was not my kind of information, that I wanted no connection with it. He insisted and he took his little book out to verify it and said, "Oh my God, I was to see you about a cultural matter." He had turned the wrong page. No, I think I can say I was not involved in anything that—oh, there were some attacks, continuing attacks, on American scholars.

Q: Was this from organs like the Patriot?

EMBREE: The Patriot or in Parliament with people denouncing American scholars for being engaged in espionage.

Q: Well, this is part of that larger disinformation operation which has always been particularly severe in India.

EMBREE: We never made any public statements. We too used our own channels.

Q: Sometimes it's the best way of making it go away.

EMBREE: Yes.

Embree's Comments On Some Of Most Important Cultural Activities Going On In India During His Period As CAOEmbree's Comments On Some Of Most Important Cultural Activities Going On In India During His Period As CAO

Q: What do you consider your most successful undertaking? Do you have a most successful?

EMBREE: I don't have a most successful. One of the things that I started that I think has died out, Goheen or maybe it was Jay Gildner, had the idea that we should try to get young Indians who would be leaders in 20 years to meet their counter- parts from America. And we started one program of bringing some together. It was very difficult in either country to say who were the 20 leaders, or who are the young people who are going to be leaders, especially difficult in India.

But I did set up one seminar which I thought was a very good idea called the Chester Bowles Seminar in which we invited some bright young Americans and some bright young Indians. It was much easier for me to identify the bright young Indians from contacts I had. It was extremely difficult to identify bright young Americans. And, of course, it always raised the question of money. How are we going to get ten Americans? We did get ten in the end, taking people who were in India. And it was very interesting and to some extent it achieved what I think we wanted to achieve. And that was to get people who would know each other through the years. I think that could have been a very successful thing if it had been maintained.

Q: Yes.

EMBREE: Of course, like many of these ventures it was personal and too much depended upon one person.

Q: Well, funds shift and priorities shift, but maybe you weren't there long enough.

EMBREE: Another thing I was greatly involved in and interested in was the American Research Center in Hyderabad. I think that is one of the most worthwhile of all our endeavors. I think it as important as the US Educational Foundation, itself.

Q: Now, this has got to do with American Studies.

EMBREE: American Studies. People often laugh when they learn somebody who had never taken a course in American history was running a big program in American Studies. It's an excellent library and it's something that has come in for a great deal of criticism. Why do we have this expensive venture, people have asked. By American standards, it's not an expensive venture, but it's the best library of American literature and history I think in Asia, probably better than in Japan, at least I've been told it is. And it's of enormous importance for Indian scholars who want to work on the United States. It could be of even more value for scholars throughout the area. Some people did come from Southeast Asia, but it is hard for Pakistanis to get there. If I had one institution I'd want to make sure survived, it would be the American Studies Research Center. I think it's very important. The great problem is getting competent Americans to be the directors. We had the wrong approach, I'm convinced, of trying to get a Fulbrighter to go out and run it for two years. It didn't work. We couldn't get the right people. It would have been much better if we'd got a good Indian to be director and an American to go out as a resident scholar for two years. I think we could have done that, and I think we still could if we were going to put more money in. But we couldn't get first class Americans to go for two years for small pay. It just wasn't in the cards.

Q: Well, I visited the Hyderabad Center and I've also sent out people as part of that selection process. So I know what you are speaking about, that it is very difficult. But certainly the results are also excellent. In the one educational exchange project in which I was involved, I think this was after you had left India, we used the Center to bring together scholars from all over South Asia, including Pakistan, at a time when we weren't even sure that the Paks would be allowed in. But because of the nature of the Center and what the project was all about, it worked.

EMBREE: I think we could do much more with that. I think that could become a really great center. Again, I think that's one place where a non-professional CAO could play a big role. One of the things that I found interesting with American Foreign Service officers in the

Embassy or in the USIS, it doesn't take long before they get out of touch with the United States, especially the American academic world. And then when you think of it, what they knew about American academic life from being a student. You get out of touch quickly. I think there's an enormous advantage in USIS of having an academic who really is into the American scene.

Frequent Resentment Toward, And Misunderstanding Of Foreign Service Officers By American Academics Visiting Or Living In A Foreign CountryFrequent Resentment Toward, And Misunderstanding Of Foreign Service Officers By American Academics Visiting Or Living In A Foreign Country

Q: Academic scene.

EMBREE: Yes.

Q: Well, you know, and I speak from the point of view of the Foreign Service officer, one finds that there's a certain amount of conflict, almost emotional resentment, between the academics who are in country and the Embassy. Part of this has got to do with the so-called perks which one has which they don't realize are not necessarily coming straight out of the government. I found that particularly true in Iran. But I think you're very right about the knowledge, the internal knowledge, of how universities work, who pushes which button and all of those things.

EMBREE: There is also, of course, ignorance on the part of the academics. I was attacked in Delhi by American academics for not pushing some particular policy that was clearly against American government policy. I remember having a very bitter argument with an American political scientist of some repute. I explained to him not only did I have no conceivable way of affecting the policy, that even the Ambassador—

Q: You're talking about political issues.

EMBREE: Political issues that were decided in Washington and we were carrying out. Academics have very little knowledge of how the government works, that the Ambassador is the agent of the State Department and the State Department is the agent of the Administration.

Q: That's right.

EMBREE: American academics, as you know, have a fashion of criticizing the government. I was talking just recently with a young woman, very well known, who referred to one of my former colleagues, Paul Kreisberg, as a CIA agent. And I said, well, Paul Kreisberg was a very high ranking officer, why would he be a CIA agent? She said, well, he was giving information about Indian politics to the American government. I said, that's what he was paid for.

Q: That's his job.

EMBREE: And she couldn't get this through her head. I said, you know, if he knew anything of value to the American government or the Indian government, of course, he would communicate it. He'd be a very poor Foreign Service officer if he didn't. And this shocked her. And she said, well, you wouldn't. And I said, well, if I knew anything that I thought would be of value, yes, of course.

I have great misgivings about second raters, especially in a country like India. They're terribly conscious, for example, of our American academics who go to India that they're often not our best people—that we don't get the people out there whose books they read.

Q: Oh, dear. Let me ask you about one other element and then maybe we will—two other elements. You traveled a great deal when you were CAO.

EMBREE: I traveled a lot to Calcutta and Madras. I was very involved with the Calcutta people. Now, you raise a very interesting question into the whole way, you know, what I

knew my job was. I didn't do very much pushing, so to speak. I spoke when I was asked to speak. Now, this was a very difficult position for me because all I am professionally qualified to speak on is India. And they would ask me to speak on India. And as you know, this was not looked upon with great favor. But I really wasn't qualified to talk about American subjects.

Q: So you did talk about India?

EMBREE: Actually, what I talked about a great deal was human rights and foreign policy, remember it's the Carter days. So I could give the President's line, which I wholly agreed with, and at the same time not have to pretend knowledge of American policy judgment.

Comparisons Of India 1948-58 And India In Late 1970'sComparisons Of India 1948-58 And India In Late 1970's

Q: This is very true. And when you do travel around, which I always enjoyed doing, it gives you a wonderful opportunity to really see what's going on instead of being bound in the capital city. And you with your background would be particularly good at this. Well, how did you find living? Are there any comparisons about living—I'm not even talking about your life as a missionary teacher and then your life in the Embassy, but I mean living—what was it? A decade later in India? Did you find that there were many changes?

EMBREE: Oh, yes. There were great changes in India itself, enormous changes. We went to India in 1948. We didn't have a flush toilet. We didn't have a refrigerator. They hadn't even heard about air conditioners. None of the helps to living which became commonplace later on. In our early days we would have been very embarrassed to live in the kind of splendor we lived in Delhi. We had got over that meanwhile. We realized the Indians didn't care. I don't think it was the least barrier to our friendships with Indians that we lived in the peculiarly large house.

Q: You had a very particular house. As I recall, it had lots of columns.

EMBREE: Lots of columns, yes. So there was tremendous change in our own lifestyle. But in that sense the change in India itself, the prosperity in India, the growth of the middle class, nobody would have foreseen when we went to India in '48. That's a change in Delhi, basically in Delhi, and in other big cities.

Q: The urban centers.

EMBREE: The urban centers. India now has a very affluent middle class.

Q: And you can see this. It's interesting when you travel around and make these observations. Has there been any special impact of this stint in the diplomatic service on your subsequent thinking or your subsequent academic career?

EMBREE: Oh, yes, I'm sure. It's linked me in a very interesting way with the academics, all of whom came through Delhi. I know virtually every American academic who came to India the two years I was there. It's also a very important link with the people in Washington, my involvement at the Foreign Service Institute.

Q: You lecture there from time to time?

EMBREE: I lecture regularly. Now, that comes about actually through connections I had made with Sid Sober and one or two others at an earlier period when I was lecturing for USIS in Pakistan.

Q: So you crossed country boundaries?

EMBREE: Yes, that was before I was CAO. I didn't when I was CAO.

Small Incidents Of Indian Government Denying Embree Trip To BhutanSmall Incidents Of Indian Government DenyingEmbree Trip To Bhutan

One interesting thing that happened when you're speaking of diplomatic matters. Bhutan was very anxious to start a program in the United States of sending their young people in the service. And Senator Percy was a great friend of Bhutan and he was pushing this both in Washington and indeed in Delhi. And so I readily agreed that I would go to Bhutan and help them select some people to go study in the United States. They had no idea how to do it. The only catch was that the Indian government wouldn't let me go. Nobody wanted to say this publicly, especially the Bhutanese education minister. However, Senator Percy didn't know and he thought I had refused to help the Bhutanese.

Q: Too bad somebody couldn't whisper in the good Senator's ear of the niceties.

EMBREE: He probably didn't realize the close rein Indians kept on where certain Americans go. That was the other side of it, by the way, that I was watched more carefully by the Indian government than I think other people would have been, because they knew me and I had been there before. They sometimes used to check my guest lists of who went to my house.

Q: Before the guests arrived.

EMBREE: Oh, yes. Often before the guests arrived.

Q: One does not necessarily think of India with such a strong surveillance program.

Mrs. Embree's Activities During Delhi TourMrs. Embree's Activities During Delhi Tour

Did Sue have any special feeling about this second stint in India?

EMBREE: She was very unwilling to go because she remembered our former life and thought that was fine when we were young, but why go through that again? So she was somewhat dumbfounded when she arrived and discovered we had two freezers and two refrigerators in our kitchen.

Q: Happily surprised.

EMBREE: Happily surprised. She played a very interesting role. Mrs. Goheen once said to me, you know, there are only two real Embassy wives in Delhi. I said, what do you mean? She said, Sue and I are the only two women who act like old fashioned Embassy wives.

Q: That raises a whole issue, which we will not go into in this interview, about this change which is very true.

EMBREE: It was true. Of course, both Mrs. Goheen and Sue had been used to entertaining for their husbands always and continued to fit in with the pattern. She enjoyed the years.

Q: She didn't teach again?

EMBREE: No, she didn't teach. She didn't have any formal kind of activity, but she was very involved with some of the young Embassy wives who were very interested in learning about India and doing things.

Q: Do you have any last set of comments that you'd like to speak about this experience?

EMBREE: No, the only thing I guess would be to put in a plug anytime I can for the possibilities of old style Cultural Affairs Officers. I think they played a real role. Again, it should be somebody good needless to say. But you've got to have—well, like Margaret Clapp. You know, these were real ornaments.

Q: Well, her stint saw a whole set of problems of a particular nature.

EMBREE: Yes. Well, I didn't know much about that at the time. I think you can play a real role of cultural diplomacy and which I think is useful anywhere. I think it's especially useful in countries like India.

Embree's Views Of Special Contributions Of Cultural Diplomacy And A Specific Problem Faced By Our International Visitors ProgramEmbree's Views Of Special Contributions Of Cultural Diplomacy And A Specific Problem Faced By Our International Visitors Program

Q: When you say cultural diplomacy, how do you view cultural diplomacy? What do you consider that its special contributions are to relations among nations and peoples?

EMBREE: What I mean by it is not just the academic exchange programs or even the cultural kind of programs we bring. One of the things that I tried to impress people with was that American universities had the best centers for studying other cultures in the world. But if you want to study Russian cultures, you should come to Columbia, not someplace in Moscow, certainly not India. You want to study Japan? If I were an Indian and wanted to study Japan, I'd want to come to—as many have, as a matter of fact—to a place like Columbia, Harvard, or so on. That's one level that I think we really never explored—what we do in terms of world cultures.

The other thing that I think is very important is not defending what we do, but to try and make clear something of the richness and diversity of American life which Indians had very little conception of. One of the programs I am most critical of and that I've been most involved while I was there and most involved with now is our Visitors Program.

Q: The International Visitors.

EMBREE: International Visitors Program. A great deal of praise from some people, enormous criticisms from other people. And I'm not sure now having seen the problems from this end what can be done. But as an example of one of the real problems. A well known Indian newspaperman came to America, and he assumed he would meet people such as his opposite number at the New York Times. Like everybody else, he wanted to interview Kissinger and Brzezinski. And they always felt insulted when they discovered

that they were going to meet the newsboy down at the New York Times. That was one of our areas of failure I think of our International Visitors Program.

Q: I guess the only way to deal with this is have fewer visitors. All the political scientists, all diplomatic historians, they all want to talk to Kissinger. They all want to talk to the same people. And you've got visitors coming from all over the world.

EMBREE: Well, this of course is the other side of it. One tends to think you've only got your 20 people from India. And of course you've got 20 people from 140 countries. That is one area that I think needs looking into. I'm not sure the volunteers always realized how ticklish this is.

Q: Well, it seems to me there just needs to be more briefing. You should be made to brief the visitor thoroughly before they go so they know what they can expect before they leave their home shores. I mean, they're not going to see a Kissinger or whoever, the leader in the field of their concern is. I have faced up to this when I was in Japan, for they all want to see no one but the best because they consider themselves the best.

EMBREE: They consider themselves the best and they are the best in their own country. Now, Japan is an interesting case. I assume they wouldn't be so vocal about their displeasure as the Indians are.

Q: They let you know.

EMBREE: They do?

Q: Oh, indeed. Of course, one of the other problems. Talking about getting—many of these people really think they know the United States, but they really don't know it. So they have no sense of the geography, of how large it is, what they can do. Then they get disappointed, a whole batch of things like that. From my experience the only way you can deal with this is a tremendous amount of hand holding on all sides.

End of interview